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The Commonweal

October 15, 1948

The Huk Guerrillas

Gordon L. Harris

Mercenary Fun

J. F. Powers

Beck the Strikebreaker ■ The Far, Far East

VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 1

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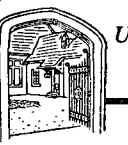
PRINCETON  *University Press, Princeton, N. J.*

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The
COMMONWEAL

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The Far, Far East

IT WOULD be consoling to think that the reason the American people have in recent months lent the Orient so little mind was that their eyes were focused on Berlin, Washington, their state capitol and the concerns of their own county or city. If they had, things would certainly have been going better in those divisions. But even for our civic-minded minority, the sprawling, teeming, unindustrialized Far East has been one big problem too many. Certainly the Government itself has been placing nearly all it eggs in European baskets.

Then, country by country, there are certain extenuating explanations of our disaffection. In Japan, General MacArthur has given every impression of having things well in hand; we could leave that mysterious land to him. Korea, which General Hodges was so moved to leave, was cut in two, and in the southern zone an orderly election had been carried through under American supervision. In an insoluble *vis-a-vis* we have been standing firm and within the week have told the Russians that the matter of withdrawal of troops will be resolved only after full review of the Korean situation before the UN.

China is a tragic perplexity. Our assistance to the Chiang Government has been sporadic and inadequate—from the viewpoint of relief, equipment, funds and military missions. Yet our expenditures for these purposes have run into millions. Lack of enthusiasm for the Generalissimo's régime and the other heavy demands upon American resources have restricted our Chinese efforts. In any case the Nanking Government has in recent months suffered a shattering series of military defeats, while its currency lost all value. With poor morale at home and inadequate commanders in the field, the Government has been steadily losing to the Chinese Communists, who present themselves to the destitute peasants as champions of land reform. At present one-third of China's 450,000,000 people inhabit the areas which have fallen under Communist control; so far the United States has found no way to check the Chinese Communists.

American papers are now talking a bit about the Calcutta Plan, whereby the Communists have plotted to keep Southeast Asia in a turmoil of unrest. This presents an added difficulty, in that our Western European Allies are involved—the British not as heavily as the French and Dutch. Consequently the United States has lost much if of its prestige in the area since VJ Day. The propaganda of the war (both Axis and anti-Axis), the Atlantic Charter and American dominance in the South Pacific roused the aspirations of these colonial peoples to a fever pitch. Then, primarily because of our concern about Europe, we did nothing to dislocate the British, Dutch and French colonial possessions. The Soviets therefore came forward as the only defender of the aspirations of the native peoples. The United States has left the Indonesians, Malayans, and Indo-Chinese to work out their own difficulties as best they can.

Lately the Calcutta Plan has been in operation. In Burma there is a serious uprising against the new Socialist-type government; disturbances have been so synchronized with the harvest periods by the Moscow-trained leaders that this heavy exporter of rice may not even be able to feed itself. This will increase unrest in adjacent lands vitally dependent upon Burmese rice. In Malaya it takes the form of an underground effort to keep British mines and plantations continually off balance by spasmodic acts of violence (a full-scale revolt last spring having failed). While Moscow-trained Muso is now in flight from the Javanese city of Maduin, which he briefly held, Indonesian Communists still hold a quarter of the seats in the Provincial Parliament. An accord has been reached between the Netherlands and Indonesian

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governments, but native resentment still runs high because of the presence of Dutch troops and a virtual blockade of the Islands of many months' duration. In Indo-China the three-year revolt of Communist Ho-Chi-Minh has so wrecked the national economy that exports are one-tenth of their pre-war value and the Communists have a dominant rôle in the Viet Nam independence movement. The rôle of the Huk guerrillas in the Philippines is discussed elsewhere in these pages.

Should the United States try to take over everywhere in the face of these gains by Russia in the East? Can the cold war be won only by a series of victories in Western Europe? Obviously no in either case.

But greater attention to the Orient is clearly in order. Mr. Dewey, with the odds now in his favor, can hardly have been thinking primarily of the Chinese-American vote when he called for greater aid for China. Nor can this be the main consideration of the House Committee which demands similar action. There are also two current developments which bear further watching. The first cadres of American-trained troops of Chiang's are now being thrown into the desperate battle for North China. And several big ECA shipments are on their way, with American supervision of the installing of these new productive facilities, supervision of the operating of these plants and supervision of their internal financing. Possibly effective aid to China must proceed along the two lines and in much larger measure.

As for Southeast Asia, at this date American influence must be brought to bear in a constructive direction. This area should have some share of Marshall Aid. As part and parcel of our European aid we must insist on colonial agreements that will embody gradual self-government and emancipation, coupled with economic agreements that are of mutual benefit—embodying a better break in this latter category than we ourselves have granted to the people of the Philippines..

The Scandal of Berlin

IT HAS been surprising to read and hear so little about the problem of scandal in Berlin. The principal newspapers and columnists have not indicated scandal as an important element in the crisis, and radio public affairs programs have not gone into it, at least the ones we have heard which have included top price commentators and also more serious and pretentious forums, like the Chicago University Round Table. Perhaps it is all taken for granted, as for a long time we supposed, but it might serve to be naïve and risk a comment on the obvious.

One reason is that the New York *Times* skipped the subject in its big editorial of October 4, where it laid down that formidable institution's line on the Berlin-in-UN crisis. The *Times* made the basic issue cover the whole thing: "That issue is whether one Power shall be permitted to defy the judgment of the overwhelming majority of mankind and not only sabotage all constructive work, and peace itself, but also employ force to impose its own will on the rest of the world." It seems impossible not to accept this view of the main thing, unhappily; and it is salutary to adjust thinking and feeling to the fact. But this is a globally generalized statement, and so perhaps somewhat abstract.

The problem is pulled down one level by numerous analysts who claim that communist Russia can never let Germany come to life outside the Soviet system. A typical statement on the subject, and likewise overwhelmingly convincing, appears in the October 8th *U. S. News & World Report*: "Basic issue is control of Germany. Soviet blockade of Berlin was intended to force West into negotiations, not primarily on Berlin, but on Western Germany. Moscow talks failed, but Mr. Stalin still wants to get his foot in the Ruhr. U S is determined to keep Russia out, to build up Western Germany fast." Stalin wants the industrial output of Germany to bolster and enrich the economy of the Soviet Union and its increasingly integrated Co-Poverty Zone. At the same time, the Soviets want no new German state to develop in power so that it might threaten the expanding hegemony of Russia, and, remotely, the boundaries of the Communist Empire itself. This all seems evident and adequately commented upon. Furthermore, it is noted almost often enough that Moscow betrays a distaste for the social and economic recovery of the non-communist system and area of Europe in itself, which would be enormously aided by a recovery of Germany.

A more likely interpretation of these publicized propositions leads to the factor of the scandal which is given to Soviet subjects by the western form of society, economy and politics. The Soviet governors fear that contact with the West, knowledge of and relations with people living under western forms, will turn their subject people against the Soviet communist régime in favor of the European-American system. Excellent observers recently home from Berlin stress this factor. In the Berlin area, where the population can contrast the two régimes, an overwhelming majority of the population has been won to an enthusiastic and heroic support of the "West" against the "East."

It is not unreasonable to speculate that this choice of the Berliners has surprised the Kremlin, or at least that the strength of Berlin's commitment to the West has upset them. In the German capital the West was at every disadvantage. We were there as conquerors, enforcing a fundament-

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ally military régime imposed on the Germans. Materially the place was a shambles, and the economy for which we were responsible, was in terrible shape. The area was isolated from all the pleasanter and more successful parts of the Western system. In force and power we were dwarfed on the spot by Russia. But even at that, even though Russia could offer pie on a plate, and the West only sweat and tears with a good chance of blood later on (should we move back from Berlin; should the Russians use war to move us), the people of Berlin chose the West. And they have chosen with a reckless heroism that has inspired the observers who have seen it.

There is a nice problem of political and psychological defense for the Communists—to protect their people from scandal—and an interesting opening for political and psychological offense by the West. Ominously, when thought about, it offers no place for bargaining, compromise or mediation. It is the mere existence of the Western system which is apparently an intolerable offense to the Soviet rulers. So long as they keep their own régime as it is, so that their people must choose another when they can see another, desperation appears to be the only possible basis for Soviet foreign policy.

Things Will Be Humming

AFTER 8,000 miles "giving 'em hell," Mr. Truman stopped off at the White House the other day to find out how everybody is holding up under his hellish oratory. Over his morning coffee Mr. Truman could read no stories of mass hysteria among voters still facing an almost certain Republican victory. Most Americans thought Mr. Dewey's success was somehow inevitable, and they were more anxious to find out what the GOP candidate was planning to do about US policy in the present European crisis.

Mr. Dewey has given the country to understand that he is an earnest internationalist. Accepting his party's nomination, he declared that "above all other purposes, we must labor by every peaceful means to build a world order founded upon justice and righteousness." To prove that he is not hiding behind the shrubbery of these phrases, Governor Dewey has emphatically campaigned for a foreign policy of American intervention in Europe and in the United Nations. The Europe that Mr. Dewey faces, with its union of the western powers, is conducting a new version of the ancient game of European balance-of-power politics, in which the US will have to play the leading rôle. This western alliance depends now on ERP money and will eventually rely on the US militarily, for as Belgium's foreign minister, Raoul de Fraiter, revealed last week, "a kind of military Marshall plan" is right now being prepared. The details of this plan are to be presented in legislative form to the next US Congress early in 1949.

What the Congress will be asked to do, in this event, is to commit itself to the ultimate and logical conclusion drawn from bi-partisan US internationalism, endorsed by Mr. Dewey. Not only will the US intervene in Europe, but she will be asked to hold Western Europe together. No half-measures can constitute a realistic balance-of-power in a power world.

It is little wonder that Mr. Dewey, facing such an issue, pleads for party unity. With the last whispers of isolationism still haunting the GOP, the New York *Times,* apprehensive of House Republican leadership, fears that Mr. Dewey may have to talk some influential Republicans in Congress out of their "provincialism" and isolationist tendencies.

If such an intra-party controversy develops, Mr. Dewey, according to his press notices, is the man to polish off the opposition. To the American voter, Mr. Dewey has been introduced as the ex-prosecutor with a genius for organization and administration. Believing every word we hear, we await January a little breathlessly and the promise of a federal government humming along like a sixteen-cylinder Cadillac. And remembering every campaign word we've heard, we expect that no cylinders will be missing when Republican Congressmen are handed a foreign policy with some tough talk in it. We can call down upon Mr. Dewey and his party no better benediction than a few ringing words from their own platform: "We shall say what we mean and mean what we say."

Nuts and Bolts

THE ENGLISH bolt will shortly, by international agreement, fit the threads of an American nut. This agreement, urged by industrial users for half a century, has been made urgent by military planning. The unified screw thread "will be a major step toward general standardization of industrial production." Mr. Bevin, suggesting that regional accords might lead to international cooperation, did not, perhaps, envisage so small a lever as a bolt, but this consummation of an industrial bottleneck, so devoutly wished and so long delayed, may perhaps be the beginning of the end of the maddening inch-millimetre differences that jam up so much possible cooperation.

Why should the English rifle, for example, be 9 millimetre, and the American, 30 caliber? Why the American machine-gun 50 caliber and the British 30? It is true that now the British have jumped to making 20 mm. cannon, and it is true, also, that ammunition for the new supersonic weapons will probably be standardized by its own

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limitations: none the less, it is a fact that it was the difficulties encountered here by American factories producing British engines and ammunition during World War II which led to this truly revolutionary reorientation of nuts and bolts. Already, in recent years, in engineering circles the world over, and generally in industry, the 1 inch equals 25.400005 millimeter has been generally abandoned in favor of the simpler 1 inch equals 25.4 millimeters exactly, and such simplifications might well lead, in time, to the adoption of the metric system as well as the decimal by the United States, and of the decimal system by Great Britain.

The differences in the date of Easter were of enormous psychological importance in the continually widening rift between Eastern and Western Christianity, as Tsarist Russia's reform of the calendar showed they realized; the adoption by the Turkish government of the Latin alphabet has definitely solved the old problem of whether Turkey was an Asiatic or a European, nation; and rods, poles, pecks, perches, gills and bushels, shillings and stones, quaint and romantic though they may sound to US ears, are just so many more equivalents to remember and to remove in international relations.

To keep one's lines of communication clear is one of the first rules in any operation, and in this great *operation democracy* upon which the USA and the UK are totally engaged, anything that is so basically important a step forward as this synchronization of bolts and nuts, is to be cheered and welcomed, even though we must look down the barrel of a gun to realize its full importance. It deserves a toast—to be drunk by all victims of the left-hand drive who ever confused a sixpence with a dime, to the downfall of all who would throw a spanner (monkey-wrench to you) in the works.

Beetle-wise

"TRUTH or Consequences" has condemned four young men to an unusual forfeit. In cars provided, with attendants to see they don't cheat, they are to drive from the West Coast to Chicago. The first one to arrive will receive a brand-new car. But their routes will be determined by an accompanying beetle, who will crawl where he will on a state map, and the car's driver must follow exactly: where the beetle stops, there he must tarry; should it proceed only backwards, or exclusively sideways, so must he drive. He never need regress beyond a state line, but that is the beetle's only daily boundary. Should the beetle sulk or sleep, the driver may not tease nor goad it into action; should it die, replacement beetles are provided by the management, and suitable fodder, and liquid refreshment appreciated by beetles are carried.

Perhaps this is the real answer to all our problems, such as: What is the world coming to? or where do we go from here? Be beetle-led, bet your bottom beetle, follow your beetle and forget your fears. Not on the turn of a card, or the throw of dice, not even on a girl's variable favor, but on a beetle's progress shall hang our fate and future.

Young Women—and Men

THE DAILY PRESS gave very intriguing excerpts from an address which Pope Pius XII gave on September 28 to two hundred delegates of the International Catholic Association for Protection of the Young Woman. We were disappointed that diocesan newspapers haven't followed up with the full text, because we think it is important and half of a still more important story. According to a special dispatch from Arnaldo Cortesi to the New York *Times*: "What is necessary, the Pope said, is in the first place to secure the moral security of young girls by means of irreproachable institutions, homes, hotels, boarding houses, restaurants and employment and orientation services and of qualified persons in railroad stations, ports and airports to look after them.

"In their living places, he added, they should find the comfort, charm, expansive intimacy and joyful pleasures of true family life.

"They should also, he declared, find there food for their intellectual, artistic, social and spiritual culture and have at their disposal libraries and not only moral and religious but also domestic and practical instruction to prepare them for an honest, holy and happy life. . . ." The problem is a "permanent chronic social evil." . . . The modern young woman "has the illusion of experience, and believes herself, on her own authority, superior to the young women of past generations. Her experience is superficial—sufficient to tarnish her delicacy and freshness but insufficient to protect her. . . . She believes herself able, with impunity, to read everything, see everything, try everything, taste everything. She is disarmed before the peril. . . .

"Formerly, he added, girls were brought up as in a hothouse and ran the risk of falling at the first contact with the world and with freedom. Present-day girls, he declared, often delude themselves that exactly contrary education and behavior will make them strong, immune and alert. . . . Moreover, continued the Pope, many modern girls' religion and piety are superficial, without substance, without depth, without doctrine. . . ."

The other half of the story, which we were looking for, of course, is the formation of an an International Association for Protection of the Young Man.

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The Huk Guerrillas

Gordon L. Harris

A PAINFULLY familiar story is unfolding in the Philippines where President Quirino has learned the bitter futility of compromising with Communism.

Anti-religious as well as anti-government in purpose, the Communist movement in the Islands is spearheaded by the notorious Hukbalahap, or "People's Army against the Japanese." Just as in Greece and elsewhere on the European continent, the Hukbalahap guerrillas supposedly joined the World War II battle against Nazism and Japanese expansion. Instead of disbanding following V-J Day, the Huks increased their strength by forcible recruiting, added to their munitions cache by raiding U.S. Army supply dumps and embarked upon a campaign to seize control of Central Luzon.

The parallel with the Greek situation goes even further. After the late President Manuel Roxas launched the new Republic of the Philippines, he ordered the Philippine Army to put down the Communist-inspired insurrection which had paralyzed recovery efforts in provinces whose rice fields and fish ponds are the Islands' larder.

Luis Taruc, "generalissimo" of Hukbalahap, became an outlaw with a price on his head. Repeated clashes between the Army and Huk squadrons drove these bandit-like gangs back into isolated areas, but failed to smash the Communist strength. Experts at nocturnal raids and terrorist kidnapings, Hukbalahap was just about an even match for the Army on familiar terrain. Nor was the policing process rendered more effective by infiltration tactics carried on within the Philippine Army by Huk agitators.

Then Roxas died and Quirino was advised to offer peace. He declared a general amnesty, telling the Huks they would be forgiven all crimes except rape—though murder was the No. 1 offense. Taruc was invited to join the Philippine legislature — to which he had been "elected" along with several lieutenants in the early months of 1946. The Roxas administration refused to recognize the election, contending it was achieved through force and intimidation. Huk troops guarded the polling places to make sure no one voted against their leaders. Not a single opposition candidate ran on the same ballot.

By August 14, last day for the Huks to accept amnesty, the grand total of 45 guns had been turned in. President Quirino said 4,000 members of the National Peasants Union (P.K.M.) and "displaced persons" accepted the Government's liberal terms. But the Peasants Union claimed a membership of 100,000, and the Huks reportedly owned 40,000 firearms.

In two weeks following August 14, the Government reported 45 persons killed in sporadic outbreaks involving Hukbalahap and the constabulary. On August 29, following Quirino's admission that Hukbalahap is Communist in leadership, Taruc and his lieutenants brazenly conducted a protest meeting in Manila's Plaza Miranda coinciding with Sunday services in Quiapo Cathedral. The man to whom Quirino offered peace charged the President failed to live up to his commitments.

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For several months following V-J Day, I lived in San Fernando, Pampanga—the focal point of the Communist revolution. I attended Huk demonstrations in Pampanga, Tarlac, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija Provinces—hearing the familiar phrases about "American imperialism" and "Catholic fascism" and "democratic Russia." I saw the Peasants Union flag, a red banner upon which a white peasant's knife was imposed. Back in the barrios where fewer "unfriendly" observers were anticipated, the flag of the hammer and sickle was unfurled.

This is the area of maximum penetration by the Communists where, for nearly three years, the hold of the Commonwealth Government and then the Republic has indeed been shaky.

This is the bloody battleground where innumerable killings have reddened the soil over which American and Japanese forces fought two campaigns. Where Catholic priests have been tortured and shot if they spoke out against the Communists. On Christmas night, 1944, a priest celebrating midnight Mass in Malolos was taken from the church, riddled with bullets and left on the steps to die. In isolated Candaba, the retreat toward which the Huks move in emergencies, a priest was shot through the mouth. I talked to priests whose congregations had been forcibly detained from Mass.

I saw the grave where Huks buried the Governor of Tarlac Province shortly before the 1946 voting. He had been kidnaped, tortured, partially burned and buried alive. Philippine MP's

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were ambushed and brutally tortured. U.S. Army personnel were fired upon while driving along the main highway between Manila and San Fernando. Army trucks were held up at road blocks and their cargoes stolen. The railway between Manila and the north was frequently raided.

Where UNRRA supplies fell into the hands of municipal authorities under Huk control, they were parceled out only to deserving "barrio lieutenants," actually leaders of Communist cells. Much of the relief goods reached the black market, just as did the rice seized from the peasants by their Union as "dues." Storekeepers also paid tribute. A few were reluctantly persuaded to comply with Huk demands in the city of Angeles when P.K.M. strong men stood outside their doors.

All of this, of course, did not begin spontaneously. Prior to World War II there had been occasional and small-scale uprisings in Pampanga Province—an important source of U.S. sugar supply. There is evidence that as far back as 1925, carefully selected Filipino labor leaders, newspaper editors, men in contact with groups or the means of contacting groups, were sent to Moscow for propaganda schooling.

The No. 1 target then, and now, is the United States. Ouster of American interests from the Islands, particularly removal of U.S. Army, Navy and air bases, has long preoccupied the Communist leadership.

Communists also demanded break-up of estates and ownership of land by the peasants. They wanted a strongly nationalist Philippine government, ownership of public utilities and, of course, a foreign policy slanted towards Russia and away from the U.S.

Coincident with the Japanese invasion, the Communist movement took on new guise. Facing a common enemy, which overran a stout-hearted but hopeless defense by American and Philippine forces, the people turned in desperation to this "grass-roots" movement. Early in 1942 the Socialist-Communist forces met in secret conclave to establish the Hukbalahap. Taruc and his cohorts claim many successes against Japanese occupation forces.

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Not until the U.S. Sixth Army returned to Bataan in 1944 did the story of Hukbalahap brutality come to light. If the Huks fought the Japanese, they fought loyal guerrillas under American command even harder. They set out to achieve firm grip on the peasant masses. There is some reason to believe the Communist activity was tolerated by the Japanese because it was anti-American basically and anti-Commonwealth as well.

As the Japanese retreated towards Baguio and inevitable surrender, the Huks made their move. Taruc seized the provincial government, naming his No. 1 lieutenant, Alejandrino, as governor. Taruc refused to place his forces at the disposal of General MacArthur, insisting upon recognition of his guerrillas as an independent Army of the Philippines. He would not order his men to surrender their weapons, though he promised to do so.

Finally he was jailed on charges of treason, subversion and murder. But immediately after V-J Day, when the authority of the Commonwealth was reestablished, he was freed by the Solicitor General, Lorenzo Tanada. The latter insisted Taruc was guilty of no crime except fighting the Japanese. President Osmena closed his eyes to the true situation, seeking political help from Hukbalahap against Roxas. There were unverified reports, however, that the Huks had penetrated Malacanan, the Philippine "White House," and had threatened the safety of Osmena's family.

One of Taruc's lieutenants had been appointed a Presidential adviser. Many others were recognized as guerrilla officers and given high positions in the Philippine Army. At the camps where guerrillas were processed for recognition and back pay, Huk organizers recruited new adherents to their cause. Huk propaganda, filled with Communist doctrine and violently anti-government, appeared in Philippine Army camps. Officers who resisted were marked men. Many were murdered.

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Nor did the Communists confine their infiltration efforts to the military. During the occupation propaganda schools were set up in remote barrios. Educators, doctors, lawyers were spirited away from their homes to attend classes. Under the guise of protecting them from the Japanese, the Communists sought new voices to spread their doctrines. Anyone who refused to cooperate was immediately branded a collaborator. Huk executioners took care of the recalcitrant.

By liberal use of the smear technique, Communists managed to weaken the faith of the common people in their elected leaders. Either a man was a "collaborator" or "Fascist" if he resisted the Huks. If he lived, he was mistrusted. If he died, well, who could prove he was right?

Chinese Communists, just 600 miles from their homeland, joined the revolutionary movement with alacrity. The newspapers they control in Manila supported Hukbalahap and the Peasants Union—actually one and the same organization.

Chinese language schools were opened at district headquarters throughout Central Luzon where the "New Life" philosophy was taught. Chinese bankers or merchants loyal to the Kuomintang were forced to contribute to support the

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movement. A Chinese legion was formed within Hukbalahap.

The Communist military organization has a basic unit known as a squadron which is responsible for a given area. Within this area it is the supreme authority, conducting secret courts, performing marriages and baptisms under the Red flag, levying taxes, decreeing executions and generally fulfilling the functions of government and church. Lest there be any misunderstanding among youth, Communist teachers were planted in public schools wherever the authority of the Commonwealth could be successfully challenged.

Squadron leaders and their subordinates adopt fictitious names to mask their identities. Such ridiculous soubriquets as "Blue Eagle," "Strong Boy," or "Linda Bie" were proudly used.

Captured Japanese arms and U.S. Army weapons stolen from supply depots gave the Huks despotic authority. Mount Arayat, the volcanic peak rising above the Central Luzon plain, was selected as the primary base of operations. In December, 1946, a B-29 bomber about to land on nearby Clark Field was fired upon by heavy calibre machine guns from emplacements on Arayat. The Huks are known to possess, in quantity, 30-calibre and 45-calibre machine guns, mortars, automatic shoulder weapons and artillery. They also maintain hidden air fields and have military vehicles, including tanks.

Their officers have an excellent comprehension of guerrilla tactics and are expert at "hit-and-run" raids.

As for the peasant, caught between the Communist and Government programs, the postwar period has been a hideous nightmare. He must accept the fact of Communist power, because he has seen it demonstrated in his own barrio. Willing or unwilling, he has no choice but to live with it, supporting it by his rice crop and taxes and, frequently, even to taking up arms. Until and unless the Republic can restore faith in the Government's authority, recovery cannot be achieved in Luzon.

Paris, A Sunday

The light informs the trees, is palpable
As flags across the air and is the air.
Moving and moveless as a singing shell
The day is secret, being much too clear.

Borne by or bearing light, the street is wonder.
No grammar of transparency can pass
Nor any logic learn the strength to ponder
The weightless leaves, the morning blown of glass.

HENRY RAGO.

Fun With a Purpose

J. F. POWERS

THAT EVENING I set out for the rally. Soon I was entering the grand ballroom of the grandest hotel in town and wondering in my shirtsleeves if I should have worn a coat. I found a seat and some literature . . . America's No. 1 Salesman, Elmer Wheeler, President of Tested Selling Institute, New York. Here's a meeting for all progressive individuals who want to increase their prestige, power and profits. . . .

It was a solemn, goodly gathering, mostly males in business suits, but here and there a woman with a husband or sweetheart, and of course, whom I'd fully expected to see, those nice-looking gray girls who'd stayed with it too long.

A man in a gray suit resembling the President of the United States mounted the podium and said he was the President of the Minneapolis Business College, said he was happy to see us all out there, said the huge crowd, twenty-five percent over last year's, did not surprise him one bit because everybody knew what a progressive town Minneapolis is and how up and coming and anxious to better themselves Minneapolis people are, anxious to serve, that is, and now just to get things going the Ewald Dairy Barber Shop Quartet, a very fly outfit, would sing. They sang "I Love the Whole United States" and other solid selections to diminishing applause.

The president of the College came forward again and said now he'd introduce the first speaker of the evening who would not be Elmer Wheeler (sighs from the audience) but would be none other than . . .

Here was the salesmanager of one of our great concerns doubling, as he said, on the faculty of the College and proud of it. He told us something of his life, his early struggles, with gestures. He'd graduated from the University of Minnesota, and now you know you might think that he'd learned all there was to learn but you know he hadn't, no sir, he was still learning, learning every day, and he guessed that was pretty true of just about everybody, wasn't that so? He turned to Elmer Wheeler on the platform as if to the exception that proves the rule, and Elmer nodded that it was so. Including Elmer Wheeler himself, the salesmanager continued boldly, and there you are.

Then he spoke of the Old School, M.B.C., and of the high old times they had there together, playing things like FBI, which was apparently a game of detection in which good salesmen were cops and bad salesmen robbers. It sharpened you up plenty and no punches were pulled. Hell, they were all in the same boat, bailing water, you might say, and building a sales talk that

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would sell, building it not on the crumbling sand of chance but on the bedrock of tested sentences that sell. Hard work? Sure it was hard work. Not all work and no play, though. Plenty of fun. Fun, yes, that's what he'd said, but fun with a purpose. That's what selling was, by the way, fun with a purpose.

And now what could be better than to hear from some of the fellows just completing the Elmer Wheeler Course in Tested Salesmanship? Nothing. So with no more ado he introduced the first fellow—Joe Somebody of Somebody Brothers, Inc.—C'mon, Joe! Joe came up front. Joe's case, as it turned out, was not uncommon. He'd gone along, getting nowhere fast, and then one day he'd enrolled in the Elmer Wheeler Course, and now, well, he was now assistant salesmanager at Somebody Brothers, and it was only the beginning, only the beginning! Ding! The ding came from the bell he rang as he left the podium. The salesmanager, whom I'd begun to think of as novice-master, explained that each speech was being timed, each man had one minute, and thus they were taught the value of time. For what was time but . . .

Next he introduced Eddie, after confiding that Eddie would not have been able to show his face to an audience like us if he hadn't taken the Course. In fact, just for the record, Eddie's first attempt to speak in public had ended disastrously. But let Eddie speak for himself! You're on, Eddie!

Eddie had a lot to say about the trials of a junior salesman. A junior salesman is just going along, not setting the world on fire, just holding his own and maybe a little bit more, when all of a sudden the boss calls him in and says, Eddie, I want you to take over while I'm on my vacation. Who, me? Whew! Well, to make a long story short, Eddie had been going to school on the sly, getting that Elmer Wheeler training, and Eddie said just between you and me he hated to think where he'd still be today without it! Ding!

The salesmanager thanked Eddie. But here, he said to us, let me show you something. You, sir. In the ice cream suit. Step up front, please. The man in the ice cream suit came to the podium. The salesmanager stuck out his hand, gave his name, asked: And yours? The man identified himself. What company? The man revealed his company. They shook hands on it. All right, everybody, let's give Bill a big hand. We all gave Bill a hand. All right now, Bill, how'd that make you feel? Good, huh? Bill had to admit it did. There you are. See what I mean? That's the sort of thing you get in our classes at M.B.C. We do it all the time. All right, then. Who's next?

Jim. Jim's had been a hard case. Jim had done stuff like this before he took the Course: spent ten and fifteen minutes parked out in front of each account, afraid to go in, afraid he wouldn't be able to sell. Jim had known what it was to be a failure, but he hadn't given up. And now those days, Jim said, were all behind him. He knitted his brows at the audience. He was selling now. He wasn't doing stuff like this any more: wasting ten and fifteen minutes parked out in front. He was going right in. He was making two more calls a day. Ding!

The veteran salesmanager must have seen himself in the next fellow, Larry. He too had graduated from the University of Minnesota. He started right off by saying he was reminded of something, of the fellow, whoever he was, who'd said that if all the salesmen in the world were laid end to end maybe it would be a good thing. We all laughed, but only to show our good nature, for the joke, if joke it was supposed to be, didn't set exactly right with us. Except Wheeler-trained salesmen, Larry added with a laugh that started us off again and explained a lot. But Larry was reminded of something again, this time of what Dorothy Parker had said when she said, If all the Vassar girls at the Yale Prom were laid end to end I wouldn't be surprised! Most of us found this amusing too, if a little old, but some, I could see, were shocked. I looked to Elmer Wheeler for a sign. He didn't seem to be shocked. I felt better. Larry, without asking for it, had our undivided attention and sensed it. He came to the point. Listen, he said, I'm no longer actively engaged in selling. Since I took the Course I've had a man working for *me!* Larry smiled thinly, covering us with the film of his success. But let me tell you this, he said, I didn't let that man of mine go through what I went through before I discovered Elmer Wheeler. Nobody sells for me until they've had Wheeler training! It's the least any employer can do! That's *real* social security! Ding!

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Now we were listening to a young woman, the first of her sex to testify. Oh, sure it's easy to tell somebody to be enthusiastic, but how are you going to get them to be it? That's the catch. Say, after sixteen weeks of Elmer Wheeler you just can't help being enthusiastic! It grows on you and gradually it gets to be so much fun you don't know what to do and finally you just can't help being enthusiastic. It's so . . . so *inspirational!* Ding!

The President of the College took over again. Next would be the door prizes. The prizes: three copies, autographed copies, of Elmer Wheeler's "How to Sell Yourself to Others," put out by the Prentice-Hall people in New York, sole publishers of Elmer Wheeler's works except the one book he would never sell, the one used

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exclusively in the Elmer Wheeler Course in Tested Salesmanship. The lucky persons came forward, two Johnsons and an Olson, a fair cross-section of the audience. The President said that it might interest us to know that a copy of "How to Sell Yourself to Others," with other souvenirs of this century, had been placed in a vault at Oglethorpe University which would be opened in one thousand years.

The moment had come. The President endeavored to give us a few facts. *Coronet* magazine, for instance, had called Elmer America's No. 1 Salesman. Elmer had built sales training programs for a host of companies. Aetna, Sears, Penneys, Macys, Bloomingdales, Johns-Manville, Statler, Remington Rand, Cadillac, Texas, Hoover . . .and the nation's business clubs, some six hundred of them, had chosen Elmer as the speaker they'd most like to hear. Eric Johnston, late of the Chamber of Commerce, a great man in his own right, had been a poor second. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you . . .

Elmer Wheeler: well-built, a blue suit, the very bow tie of his photographs, an honest face, eyes that seemed to look out only, handsome in the rugged American manner of Pat O'Brien, Spencer Tracy and others.

Previously I'd stolen occasional glances at Elmer, always wondering at the ease, the somnolence almost of the man under the fire of the proceedings. Now I saw another man. I saw a champion answer the bell. I saw the man we all wanted to be. I saw Elmer looking out at us without a word, just a smile for us, but what a smile! Pardon me, Elmer said, taking off his coat. The President was there to receive it. Elmer faced us all again and the smile was still there, flickering for us. He stretched his arms and adjusted his cuffs. That's better, he said. We all laughed, pleased with the hominess of the man. Then he began to speak. In a moment he had us all impaled and wriggling on something sharper than logic, not oratory either, but something I can only call Elmer. He said each one of us, if we only knew it, possessed a sizzle. All kinds of sizzles, in the world, we all had one, and we all had to find ours. And that's what he was there for. Through the medium of his directors who had studied under him, he would first ferret out, then synchronize our several sizzles. It was all in the Course, new classes forming, running sixteen short weeks.

Oh, he didn't really blame us for what we were. Here we were in 1948, and a lot of us still using the same old 1929 sizzle. The day of the high pressure salesman was over. Gone the day of the derby, box-back coat, gold watch chain, the big black cigar. At hand the day of the low pressure salesman, service, sincerity. The war had changed a lot of things, including selling. Selling had degenerated during the war and so had we. During the war years all we'd had to do was take the order. We had learned to relax and take it easy. Now things were getting back to normal. With steak plentiful again, it was no longer enough to sell the steak. Now we had to go back to selling the intangible sizzle. A lot of heads were going to fall. Sell the sizzle or starve!

★

Elmer turned to history. There would always be salesmen, there had always been salesmen. Back to Methuselah. Who did we suppose had popularized such a thing as the Roman toga? A salesman. How? A salesman had told the common Roman that the toga would make him look senatorial. (Of course people didn't mind looking like that then!) Hence, the toga. That was selling. That was selling the sizzle. That was Sizzlemanship.

Take an example. (Always take an example.) When Elmer was a boy in Texas he'd sold eggs by the side of the road. But it wasn't until the wind blew his sign away that he really began to sell eggs. He painted a new sign with the S in Eggs turned around backwards. So what happened? So the smart city slickers, seeing his sign, thought now there's a nice hick for you. Too dumb to sell stale eggs. So they'd pull up at Elmer's stand and buy eggs. But did he stop there? He did not. When a lady asked, as ladies will, Are your eggs fresh? he didn't say, Yes'm, they're only a day old. He said, Pardon me, lady, do you mind if I go to the henhouse and get some real fresh eggs for you? She didn't mind. She'd be a fool if she did. But did Elmer stop there? No. Because the night before he'd trussed up a hen in the henhouse and as he left with the eggs, which were in a barrel just inside the door, he'd give the old hen a helluva good squeeze, and the poor customer thought the hen had just laid a dozen special for her. That was selling the sizzle. Not trickery, mind you, but tricks. The trouble with trickery was you couldn't use it but once. Point One, then—*Don't Sell the Steak—Sell the Sizzle!*

Elmer had to laugh now at some of the ideas he used to have about success. He'd thought a lot of fool things. He'd thought it was being born with a silver spoon in your mouth. Then he'd thought it was who you knew. Then, the craziest of all, he'd thought it was luck. Now he knew it was none of those things. It was *you*. But on with the show!

Point Two! *Don't Write—Telegraph!* Be brief. Remember the first ten words you speak to a party are more important than the next ten thousand. What was it that sold a million square clothespins? Three little words: *It Won't Roll!*

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What was it that sold a million pairs of long red underwear? Three little words: *It Won't Itch!* A whole new approach. Thinking of others—of the other fellow's need, not yours. You, not I. In other words, the thing you had to develop was your *Youability*. Not I, but you—not what *I* think, what *I* like, what *I* want, but what *you* think, what *you* like, what *you* want. That was Youability. But first you had to know yourself. *Know Thyself!*

Point Three! With all the Youability in the world you still couldn't sell icewater to the poor people in hell without Point Three. *Say It With Flowers!* To give an example. (Always give an example.) He'd gone to a local shoestore for this one. He'd heard a clerk say to a lady who had a hard foot to fit, Madame, this toe is almost as big as your great toe. Get it? The clerk didn't say your *big* toe to a lady; he said your *great* toe. Class with a capital K. Say It With Flowers!

Point Four! *Not if but which!* This reminded Elmer of the job he'd done for Walgreen's drugstores. The company wanted to push eggs, but how? Elmer, called in to consult, gave the matter a lot of thought and what he came up with was one of the landmarks of American merchandising. Remember going into Walgreen's and ordering a malted and the clerk asking, One egg or two, sir? He nodded at you—the nodding was very important—and you nodded back, said, One, and thought you were getting off easy. That had been Elmer's idea. Not if, but which! It won't work all the time of course, but it works enough. It was still no use, though, without Point Five.

Point Five! *Watch your bark!* Cultivate a nice, pleasing voice. Don't argue. Never argue. There was one word and only one word that would stop an argument. Elmer should know. He had tried over 100,000 words in his Word Laboratory, but only one word had passed the test. And that word was Why. When you're in an argument, stop talking and smile a while and say, Why? You'll be surprised. It puts the other party on the defensive. While the other party's talking, you think. The other party has to stop and be logical. When the other party stops to be logical he's lost. He's yours for the asking if you know your tested sentences that sell. He's your customer and that's better than winning any argument. That's *winning* any argument!

And then Elmer, lowering his voice, brought the rally to a perfect close. He thanked us all for coming, but cautioned us against the rash use of the medicine he'd given us. It should be used only according to doctor's orders. Training! Training would tell and sometimes even training wasn't enough. To give an example. Elmer had been called in by Aetna. Seems Aetna was running up against a lot of tough customers, particularly in New England. At the approach of the Aetna man these tough customers would rear back and say, Oh, yeah, you can't get to first base with me! What to do, with people talking like that? Aetna went to Elmer. Elmer went to his Lab. When he came out he had it. To prove it, he went and worked door to door with the Aetna men. Here was his answer to, Oh, yeah, you can't get to first base with me: Ah (watching his bark), but it isn't you that we're worried about, sir. It's that little wife of yours, it's the butcher, the baker, the undertaker. We're just worried that she won't be able to get to first base with them—unless . . . and of course by this time the poor devil had his fountain pen out, ready and willing, dying to sign. Could you blame him?

But nothing works out perfectly. To give an example. A young Aetna man had mixed up the foregoing tested sentence to sound like this: Ah, yes, it isn't you that we're worried about. It's the butcher, the baker, the undertaker. When you're gone will they be able to get to first base with your wife?

Elmer had left us with a laugh, but even more with food for thought. Once more the President came forward. He announced that Elmer was going up to his room to shower, but would be right down to see his many friends.

The Stage & Screen

Edward, My Son

IT'S STILL a sorry season, although there's not much question that Gilbert Miller and Harry Sherek are producing something of a hit-vehicle with this English importation. The piece is certainly not a play, it is an exhibition, and my chief quarrel with it is that it is twice as silly as it needs to be. Robert Morley has conjured (assisted by Noel Langley), a number of large parts, in the chief of which he waddles successfully if not very consistently. He *is* an actor; and I suppose that is the best excuse for the amount of non-consciousness, non-invention, non-sense, and allover trickery he is dishing these evenings at the Martin Beck. His picture gives us a lower-middle-class Father, who falls into crime in order to afford medical aid for his son; progresses from there into millions of money by dint of the same rationale; ruins his child, his marriage, his friendships, and his associates; and proceeds, by the final curtain, to go on as before. Moreover, this "villain" is introduced to us by himself (done into an enormous furred greatcoat by this time) in a number of pre-curtain strolls designed all for laughs and no information at all. And moreover again, the fakery of the evening is largely increased by the protag-

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onist—Edward, My Son—never appearing at all.

There is naturally no conclusion to be drawn from the doings; there are no characters; there is no line. There are simply situations, and the most provocative poses and tags which could be devised, plus an awful lot of acting. But the trouble is that, since Mr Morley has been unable to choose between a conception of his man as Fatty Arbuckle or as a physically enlarged Noel Coward, it is quite impossible to recognize what he is about. It is true, he is pouting, candid, cumbersome, nimble, naive and ironic by turns; but in the end, the whole effort comes off as *a turn,* and I will say that this is theatre at its worst. Nothing of history, psychology, human anguish, nor plain fact, nor even accident, is on view. Nothing but the entrance (oh!), the exit (ah!), and the pretension of an idea applicable to this year of grace. I do strongly recommend Mr. Morley to stick to period stuff (Jonathan Wilde, maybe?) until he can manage a villain of recognizable motivation and modern size.

Raymond Sovey's sets represent the first disappointment I have been dealt by this subtle designer. They are cramped at instances, and otherwise over-crowded. I must append that Peggy Ashcroft, in the role of the lesser Wife, will surely be carrying off most of the professional honors this side of the Atlantic. She does, by some miracle, build her job into a believable woman. It is quite the most impressive piece of mature acting I've seen in seasons, and it's no mistake that all of the lobby talk centered about her interpretation of a very young, then sequentially older and alcoholic and desperate person. Her work is to be studied to our gain: an imaginative and understandable business. (*At the Martin Beck*).

Town House

WHILE THERE seems small point in describing something already closed, this Gertrude Tonkonogy adaptation of the John Cheever stories, lately inserted into the midst of the *New Yorker* fiction, deserves at least an inquiry if not a comment. The show was incomprehensible, and I mean neither the producer (Max Gordon), nor the adaptor (above), nor the author (above), nor any of the actors, harm in demanding exactly: how come? Why should, for instance, the most expensive and unworkable set in the world be built for a story of the interactions of a number of people forced to live together during the war years in this city? Why should any writer allow his work to be so transgressed, minimized, squeezed out of shape? Why should a farce be built of material suitable to an honest, plain, fairly funny, fairly tragic drama? Why should Mary Wickes (a competent gal) be so consistently forced to stand outside any play in which she is cast; constantly burlesqued, clowned? Why is James Monks ever cast? And what happened to Cheever's ordinary, recognizable people? I suspect if these questions could be answered, one might learn the reason why seasons change, although Broadway does not, and why the real public walks another distant street.

KAPPO PHELAN.

What Makes Sammy Run?

IN SPITE of the fact that *"The Saxon Charm"* is static and talky, it is still an interesting movie and should have some appeal for intelligent audiences. Robert Montgomery plays the famous theatrical producer, the central character in this film based on Frederic Wakeman's novel, with sort of a lip-licking gusto as if he enjoyed every scene in which Saxon exhibited his vicious meanness and still retained his so-called charm. Actually, the film consists mainly of a series of sequences proving what a thoroughly despicable heel Saxon really is. The rest of the scenes are fillers-in dealing with Saxon's victims: John Payne as the playwright who gets the usual Saxon shove-around, Susan Hayward as Payne's wife who soon becomes wise to Saxon (however, the fact that their marriage almost goes on the rocks is more their fault than Saxon's), and Audrey Totter as Saxon's girl friend, a singer who gets the rawest of raw deals when she tries to leave the possessive egoist. I think this could have been a much better and more meaningful movie if it had gone into more explanation of how Saxon got that way. Some attempt is made when the overbearing man softens for a moment and tells about his past: the rebellious kid who was ashamed of his parents' poverty. Saxon realizes he has no control and that he's actually working against himself; but neither he nor we really know why. And why, in this case, is as important to us as the repelling and fascinating movie that shows us how he behaves.

"Cry of the City" is another of those well-made, semi-documentary, gangster-copper movies. Although Director Robert Siodmak was greatly successful in telling his story of two men through a series of effectively contrasting scenes of action, this film too could have been improved by stressing the reasons why one man became a force for good while the other followed a career of crime. When asked why he does these things, the latter replies: "I dunno; you just get started; you keep going." The anguish that this Italian-American causes his family is exceedingly well portrayed. In fact all the characterizations are skilfully handled: Richard Conte as the ruthless criminal who uses even his friends to gain his ends, Victor Mature as the soft-spoken understanding cop who has a background similar to the criminal's, Shelley Winters as the blond babe who helps the gangster, Hope Emerson as the big, powerful masseuse who plays the criminal's own kind of game, and many others who add to the realism of this thriller. Richard Murphy wrote the good script from Henry Helseth's novel, "The Chair and Martin Rome," and Director Siodmak has made it with the help of a good cast and New York sets into an impressive thriller. The scene at the end in which the cop confronts the criminal in a church is packed with emotion and suspense. You won't forget it in a hurry.

"Larceny" has a lot of suspense too, but it is one of those meaningless exercises in excitement that keep you on the edge of your chair but impress you only for their quick thrill. Without getting very deep into motivation, it presents the story of a swindler (John Payne) who is

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won from his evil ways by the beauty and kindness of a California widow (Joan Caulfield). Unfortunately, this movie has a relation to reality only when the real villains (Dan Duryea, Shelley Winters, Richard Rober, etc.) go into action. The rest is all pap decorated with paste jewelry.

Like a welcome breath of out-of-doors, after these excursions into man's meanness, comes Robert Flaherty's beautiful documentary: *"Louisiana Story."* Although his newest film is a little more arty than his earlier first-raters like "Nanook of the North" and "Man of Aran," Flaherty is still one of our top-notch film makers. His camera is almost magical in capturing the spirit of place and people. This time it roams through the bayou country, concentrates on a Cajun youngster and tells us through a series of perfectly photographed sequences about the boy's superstitions, his parents, his pet raccoon, his fishing trips and his reaction to the machine world which invades his territory when engineers come to drill an oil well. The engaging youngster and the other members of this cast have been so well directed by Mr. Flaherty that the whole piece seems to be happening for the first time right before your eyes. The script itself is very simple, and it wisely aids rather than leads the lovely visuals. This is the case also with Virgil Thomson's excellent musical score. In its own way, "Louisiana Story" is even more exciting than the thrillers in our more popular theaters—not only because of its suspenseful scenes like the fight with the alligator, but also because it succeeds in making the beauty of everyday life exciting. "Louisiana Story" is what the movie version of "The Yearling" could have been.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Labor Movement

Beck the Strikebreaker

OUT on the West Coast they say that there are three branches to the labor movement: the AFL, the CIO and Dave Beck.

Beck is actually executive vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, a union of over 1,000,000 truck drivers and widely assorted workers which is affiliated with the AFL. Most of the "widely assorted workers" belong to Beck, who not only picks up everything that is not nailed down—including fruit pickers, shop girls, etc.—but even pries up a good deal that is nailed down. Beck has operated mainly on the West Coast to date, but the chances are that he will succeed the aging Dan Tobin as head of the Teamsters and that he will be bigger and bigger news throughout the country.

We won't say that the following incident is typical of Beck's method of operating. It is merely one of his low points. It is typical, however, of the man's power at the present time.—Since 1936 the International Association of Machinists (formerly affiliated with the AFL, but now an independent union of over 600,000 members: a sound and responsible organization) has held contracts at the Boeing airplane plant in Seattle. Last April 22nd, 14,000 members of the Machinists walked out in a legitimate strike over wages and working conditions. Up to that time Beck had never claimed jurisdiction inside the plant. It was only after the strike started that he staked out a claim to the warehousemen. He then proceeded to supply strikebreakers, even going so far as to recruit high school graduates.

Even AFL unions were disgusted with this conduct. The Washington State AFL condemned him at its convention. Dan Tobin was reported growing more and more uneasy, and it was said that he was thinking of discharging Beck as executive vice-president of the Teamsters. Then the AFL executive council met in Washington. Beck descended upon the meeting with about fifteen henchmen, including underlings from such remote spots as Los Angeles. The council, including Tobin, was a pushover. It voted unanimously to back Beck in what was described merely as "a jurisdictional dispute" with a union that is not affiliated with the AFL. A short time later the strike folded up, after four and a half months of fighting the combined forces of Boeing and Beck.

Imagine this power-crazy opportunist when and if he secures undisputed control of the Teamsters. Anyone that can tell truck drivers not to ship stuff in or out of a plant has almost life-and-death control over that plant. That is one reason why AFL officials in other unions shake with fright at the thought of losing the good will of the Teamsters. They can make or break strikes for you whether you have anyone organized on the inside or not.

Let us hope that there is enough courage and decency left in the Teamsters union itself to call a halt to Beck's mad scramble for power before it is too late. Only a groundswell of rebellion from the rank-and-file will do the trick now. At the top there seems to be nobody who has the guts to stand up to the man. Here is a good subject for prayers.

Secession—the New Popular Sport

STALINIST-controlled unions with about 40,000 members have now seceded from the Retail Wholesale & Department Store Union, CIO, and in so doing have pulled out of the CIO itself. They are looking now for a new home in some "AFL or CIO union." This makes the secession picture complete.

For over a year locals of Communist-led unions in the CIO have been pulling out to affiliate with other CIO unions, with AFL unions, or just to play by themselves for a while. Now we have secessionists going in both directions, out of pro- and anti-Communist unions. This would seem to be the point at which you could say that the CIO itself has reached a crisis.

Within the past year, also, two unions, the Transport Workers and the National Maritime Union, have witnessed major revolutions within their ranks. The NMU has changed from a solidly Stalinist outfit into a solidly anti-Stalinist outfit. The TWU seems to be in the process of doing the same thing, with the pay-off coming at the Chicago convention in December.

It is true that in both these organizations the revolution received its impetus from the personal revolt of such leaders as Mike Quill (TWU) and Joe Curran (NMU), the former supposed to have been a Party member and the latter a loyal hanger-on. But if it happened there, it can happen elsewhere. It can also happen that whole Stalinist internationals may be pulling out of the CIO the way things are going.

Norman McKenna, author of that excellent new

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pamphlet, "The Catholic and His Union," writes in that we ought to say something about the disintegrating effect of electrical workers going into an auto union, brass workers into a shipbuilding union, insurance agents into a papermakers union, and so on. If our unions are going to be catch-alls, reaching into four or five industries, as some do now, what will happen when and if we ever try to put the Industry Council set-up into effect? It is a good point. Together with the other points it adds up to this. There are times when no avenue appears to be open but the way of secession. There are other times when the long-suffering boys who stick to the bitter end turn out to be the smart ones after all. In two unions already, patience has paid off. It will probably pay off in others before the present flux subsides.

JOHN C. CORT

AS OTHERS SEE IT

American Catholics

BRUCE MARSHALL, Scottish author of "Father Malachy's Miracle," and "The World, the Flesh and Father Smith," in the first of two articles says the following in the *Catholic Herald* of London:

> In the United States of America the Catholic Church, as in no other country of the world, is doubly Catholic: it is Catholic because it is part of the Universal Church; and it is Catholic because it is also a microcosm of the Universal Church, including within itself large numbers of the Irish, German, Polish, Italian, Spanish. . . .
>
> Preaching to such a conglomeration of nationalities, what chance have the 4 Cardinals, 20 Archbishops, 138 Bishops and Coadjutor Bishops. . . and 40,470 priests . . . of succeeding where the Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and priests of Continental Europe have, despite heroic efforts, failed? What chance have they got of getting into the heads of their co-religionists and compatriots that the one thing which will simultaneously save the world from chaos and rehabilitate religion in the eyes of the unbelievers is the integral practice by Christians of both the first and the second commandments [of the New Law]?
>
> Firstly, Catholics in America, like Catholics in England, constitute a minority of the population and minorities, as a rule, practice their religion more assiduously . . . there seems to be something in the fact of a religion being practiced by a minority of inhabitants of a country which causes the members of that minority to walk more circumspectly than those who belong to the religion professed by a majority. . . .
>
> Secondly, American Catholics belong, for the most part, to the Saxon and Celtic races, who are much more amenable to discipline and decorum, whether of God or of Caesar, than their Latin co-religionists. . . .
>
> Thirdly, American Catholics live in a country young enough still to be uncorrupted by the dusty and sterile skepticisms of the continent of Europe. In America, despite Wall Street and political bosses, it is still respectable to believe in the benevolence of God, in romantic love and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. . . .

Catholic and Public Schools

THE opening this fall of the new four million dollar Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains, N. Y., led *Time* to comment from a general non-Catholic viewpoint on Catholic education in this country.

> U. S. Catholics spend $182,250,000 a year to run their church schools. This is America's largest single religious expenditure—and more than any U. S. Protestant denomination spends for all purposes. The total 1947 expenditure of the Methodist Church was only $165,000,000. . . .
>
> About half the 2,947,000 Catholic school children in the country go to parochial schools. In the last 20 years there has been a large and significant increase at the high-school level. In 1930 the Catholics taught 241,869 boys and girls between ninth and twelfth grade. The figure is now nearly 490,000—more than double. Last week the principal of Stepinac High, short, amiable Father Joseph C. Krug, explained why Catholics have striven so hard for this increase. Said he:
>
> "High schools are a graveyard for the Catholic religion. These are the years when adolescents take their first critical look at life, at themselves and at the world around them. The philosophy of this school, like every Catholic school, is to give a thorough academic training but always to emphasize the overall religious significance of life. . . ."
>
> The ardent identification of Roman Catholicism with Americanism has roused non-Catholics to be equally ardent in recalling the traditional American doctrine of separation of church and state.
>
> All over the US the Catholic and non-Catholic concepts of this doctrine have clashed repeatedly over such issues as the transportation of parochial pupils in public-school buses, and Government aid to parochial schools. The five to four Supreme Court decision of 1947 on the Ewing Township bus case upheld the legality of parochial schools receiving public aid in such fields as transportation, textbooks and health services.
>
> The Catholics argue that: 1) they are taxed to support public education; 2) they also support their own schools; 3) these schools save other US taxpayers some $400,000,000 a year in additional taxes. (Catholic schools save the taxpayers much more than their actual $182,250,000 cost per year, because their operating expenses are less than half the public school average.) . . .
>
> The real difference between Stepinac and its rival public high schools . . . is religion. Because of the separation of church and state in the US, no pupil can now have any religious instruction, even a Bible reading, on public-school premises. At Stepinac every boy, whatever his course, has a 45-minute class in religion every day of his four high school years. He attends regular services in the school chapel and auditorium. Just before Easter each year, the entire school will hold a three-day religious retreat. . . .
>
> The overwhelming majority of Stepinac alumni will, of course, remain laymen . . .

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Books

The Seven Storey Mountain. Thomas Merton. Harcourt. $3.00.

IN Bernanos' "Diary of a Country Priest," when a renegade cleric who has been asked by the dying curé to give his blessing protests his unworthiness, the holy man says: Grace is everywhere. These words are the message of the autobiography of Thomas Merton, the Trappist poet. They are the description and the explanation of his life.

This book is, as the cover notes, the story of a young man (he is now about 34) who led a full and worldly life, and, then, at the age of 26, entered a Trappist monastery. He was born in southern France, near the Spanish border, of a New Zealander father and an American mother. The mother died while he was young, and he was without family life and without religious training or knowledge during his school days in France, England and America.

At Cambridge and Columbia University he figured among that group of active intellectuals who are always a prominent section of collegiate communities. He read Joyce, Huxley, Waugh, Hemingway, Lawrence; he enjoyed listening to Duke Ellington, Bix Beiderbecke; was aware of Picasso, Chagall; ran on the cross-country team; picketed for the Communists; drank a lot; fell in love a couple of times. But this ordinary existence was altered sharply with conversion and a life of contemplation. And Merton's sole explanation is Grace. Indeed, there is no evidence of a progressive attachment to the Church, no definite influence of Catholic theology or Scholastic philosophy, or of good example on the part of other Catholics. An apparently inexplicable gift permitted him to know at once the futility of secular activities, the tremendous power of Grace, and the surest way to happiness.

Merton's view of life is sacramental; not in the sense that poets who see created things as precise reflections of God's power and goodness are said to have a sacramental outlook, but rather in this sense—that all human accidents, all contingencies (meetings, discoveries, intuitions) which lead men to an understanding of the supernatural are considered visible symbols of an interior presence, a spiration of Grace within the soul. On the other hand all worldly desires, even if they are not evil in themselves (Merton makes great use of the term *per se*), are detours, obstacles on the narrow, difficult way which finally promotes men to the state which Maritain calls "freedom of autonomy" where the human will is the will of the Creator. Thomas Merton is the current pilgrim of the absolute.

The book is written simply; the sensory images of boyhood are wonderful, and the incisive quality of his criticism, that tartness of his humor have not been sentimentalized by Merton's entry into a monastery. There is never an attempt to exploit religious experience for an artistic purpose, there are no pietistic platitudes.

For those people who might be concerned about the lack of dignity in a Trappist convert undertaking such a project, it should be explained that Merton continues to write on orders from his superiors, and he would be pleased if he were permitted to quit. However, he has become a vessel in the hands of his Maker and his superiors; he lives no longer Thomas Merton, but Christ lives in him.

"The Seven Storey Mountain" is a book that deeply impresses the mind and the heart for days. It fills one with love and hope and shame—shame for one's self.

GEORGE MILES

The Unknown Sea. François Mauriac. Holt. $3.00.

WHEN François Mauriac sets out to relate the decline and fall of a Bordeaux bourgeois family, and finds time, in between the economics of the thing, to examine the middle-class soul, adolescent passion, and man's search for an interior quiet, then the reader might well settle back and expect the best. Only this time he will get something closer to the worst.

M. Mauriac pulls the fiscal pins out from under the Revolou family with his customary relentlessness, sending them spinning into a material and psychological cavity. The Costadot family executes this piece of dirty work, and since they, too, are just more of the same bourgeois breed, you can see that this novel is well peopled with small minds and spiritual cripples. In fact, it would be hard to find in one place more downright mediocre individuals than there are here: the central figure, Rose Revolou, after being jilted, is unable to cope with life thereafter and fades away into a special limbo for fragile hearts; Denis, her brother, who gives much of his time to sloppy self-pity, bemoaning the fact that his sister doesn't show more sympathy for him in life's crises, flunks a school examination and goes off and marries the neighbor's daughter as a compensation for this set-back; Julien Revolou is such a delicate neurotic mechanism that he takes the family disgrace literally lying down in his bed, face to the wall, at times refusing to speak or even to observe the niceties of sanitary hygiene; Pierre Costadot is an aspiring young poet who wanders in every once in awhile with a few clumsy lines from his epic love poem, *Atys and Cybele,* and then drops off into obscurity, sick about not being able to marry Rose since Rose loves Robert Costadot instead; and Robert—well Robert can't make up his mind to do much of anything, and after hedging awhile about marrying Rose, he passes her by, deciding that after all she would be an unexciting substitution for more promiscuous evenings out; Leonie Costadot and Lucienne Revolou, the gray matriarchs of this family piece, have nothing much better to do than to preside over their slipping fortunes and have a good grieve about it all.

To do something with this collection of invalids would take some high-class doing, but Mauriac seems to feel that the whole business is really not worth losing any sleep over. He approaches these worried faces and is discouraged by their whitish pallor; such low-lying creatures are just not up to carrying what Mauriac can say when he wants to. None of them has the metaphysical reserve to face up to a really frightening insight into human affairs. Mauriac would like to make a sacrificial and expansive soul of Rose, and tries to warm up to the job two or three times, but the final effect is that Rose is only a mooning young girl afflicted with some tough luck.

Here, then, is M. Mauriac seen yawning in a deflated moment; on the merits of the past, he rates a pardon—and condolences.

EDWARD F. MEAGHER

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The West At Bay. Barbara Ward. Norton. $3.50

BARBARA WARD, an editor of *The Economist* and one of the best-known British radio lecturers, has also been heard on our side of the Atlantic, addressing among other gatherings the New York *Herald Tribune* Forum. She is a charming, sensitive person, very sure of the impression she makes and able in a discussion to cope with anyone in quick repartee and consistent polemics. She is not quite so brilliant as a book author. She has not the "long breath" needed for writing a deep and penetrating book. This book (her first, at least in this country) is full of the most clever remarks, but it reads more like a collection of intelligent essays than as the development of some new inspiration. Barbara Ward is best in her proper field, economics; her political and philosophical reflections, though mostly on the right track, lack vitality. This is not so much a book to open up new vistas as a very competent thought-provoking analysis of the current problems facing the Western world, an excellent starting point for a group discussion of these problems.

The main thesis of the book is the necessity of European self-help, since the Marshall Plan, though indispensable, will be no miraculous panacea and Europe's deficit will still be large in 1952 when Marshall aid will be exhausted. America offers Europe a chance, but Europe herself has to utilize it. One cannot buy the reconstruction of a continent; it can only result from creative planning and the joint activity of the European nations themselves. The western European states face a decisive test. It is a fallacy to suppose, says Miss Ward, that Communism is a specifically Asiatic problem. On the contrary, it originated a century ago in Europe, it has grown there alongside the disintegration of democracy and it may be triumphant if democracy fails. The spread of Communism is not so much the work of nasty men as a consequence of democratic weakness.

Therefore the Western world has to reestablish a framework of stability and prosperity in twentieth-century terms. The line Miss Ward advocates is of course that of a Western European Confederation, an idea which the sparrows are chirping from the cliffs of the North Cape to the orange groves of Sicily.

But she makes a very interesting analysis of this much discussed problem. Most people think that a customs union is the *sine qua non* of Western European integration. But the author claims that this is not a worthwhile step in itself but only one part of a full economic union that should emerge by other means. She expects a solution from merging the industries of Western Europe for greater efficiency and mutual benefit. She even defends cartels and advocates large corporations for controlling agriculture and the production of basic foodstuffs. These are the most provocative and certainly widely discussed elements in her economic analysis.

Miss Ward also deals extensively and rather optimistically with the American situation—as the question of a further American boom or a new American depression will be of the utmost significance for European reconstruction. Part of these reflections were published in THE COMMONWEAL of September 24.

Occidental civilization will survive only if it has the power to inspire men with the conviction that the values it attempts to preserve from Communism are really worth sacrifices. Communism with its apocalyptic appeal, its praise of classless society, its cry for fraternity, has penetrated deeply into the confines of the Western word. "The West is offered the choice of fulfilling the promise inherent yet still unrealized within it of creating a free, good and just society." Its failure, she is convinced, will mean the end of that possibility. MAX FISCHER.

The Running of the Tide. Esther Forbes. Houghton. $4.00.

IN AN afterword to her latest book, "The Running of the Tide," Esther Forbes announces "there are points in common" between her Inmans (the chief family in this historical novel of early nineteenth century Salem, Mass.) and the Crowinshields, Salem's famous merchant family. Brief research into the life of the Crowinshields confirms this reviewer's opinion that in order to get her novel to Hollywood, Miss Forbes should be forced to take it personally around the Horn in a sailing vessel of the same period of which she writes. M. B. JONES

Crossroads of America: Kansas City. Darrell Garwood. Norton. $4.00.

IT has been said that the history of Kansas City is substantially the history of the nation during the past hundred years. It was there that the West began; it was on the borderline between North and South during the Civil War; it has been the scene of many conflicts typical of the nation since that time. Darrell Garwood has started his story with the exploits of Kit Carson; he ends it with the activities of Tom Pendergast. The twenty chapters represent an outstanding example of regional history. Many readers will especially appreciate the account of Civil War days in Kansas City and the reasons for Order No. 11 issued by General Thomas Ewing; others will like the ample treatment given to Jesse James; practically everyone will find Tom Pendergast's life-story instructive. Attractive end maps are used, upon which Cairo is mistakenly located in Kentucky. This hardly lessens the value of this excellent contribution by Mr. Garwood. PAUL KINIERY

Henry David Thoreau. Joseph Wood Krutch. Sloane. $3.50.

THIS first volume of the new American Men of Letters series is a brilliant biographical and critical study which offers a more fully rounded picture and better balanced interpretation of Thoreau and his work than any previous book. It is at once an admirable introduction for those who have not read Thoreau and a profoundly penetrating estimate for those unfamiliar with the six thousand pages of the little-read "Journal," which is more representative of Thoreau than "Walden" or the other books which he compiled from it. Mr. Krutch has performed an almost incredible *tour de force* in covering the whole subject so thoroughly within the compass of a brief book.

In opening the introductory chapter which deals with Thoreau's contribution to American thought, Mr. Krutch observes that the basic lesson which Thoreau taught himself and sought to teach others might be summed up in the one word "Simplify!" It is clear that Mr. Krutch has learned Thoreau's lesson well, for he simplifies all the problems that Thoreau's life and work afford. After a brilliant explanation of how it is that Thoreau thought of himself as a failure and was so considered by his contemporaries, and yet has come to rival Emerson and

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Hawthorne in modern reputation, Mr. Krutch proceeds to give vivid and intuitive accounts of Thoreau's youth, of his early decision to "sign off" from society, and of the infinitely fruitful stay at Walden. Then the emphasis of the book is shifted from biographical to critical, though the two approaches are interwoven throughout. The four final chapters deal with Thoreau's later attitude toward society, his science and philosophy, his stand on slavery and other social questions of the day, and his style as an expression of his nature. No facet of Thoreau's intricate personality and mentality is slighted in these pages which Alfred North Whitehead would have found full of "happy simplifications." If it were ever wholly true that the style's the man, it was true of Thoreau; and all the many threads of Mr. Krutch's admirable analysis are pulled together in his final chapter. This book is a notable interpretation of one of America's most distinctive thinkers and writers. MASON WADE

Politics in the Empire State. Warren Moscow. Knopf. $3.00.

THE newspaperman, for all that Hollywood has done to discredit his breed, has always seen himself as something of a stethoscope applied to the body politic. His not to reason why, but merely to measure the heartbeat, weigh the facts and bang them out as well and as rapidly as he can. Despite the tendencies for editorialized coverage, exemplified newspaperwise by the late Cissy Patterson's *Washington Times Herald* and the journalistically late Ralph Ingersoll's *PM*, most newspapers and newspapermen eschew the missionary's role for the less exalted one of straight reportage.

Foremost among newspapers publishing news is the *New York Times* which in its happily long history has graduated the most efficient, if not the most dynamic, corps of sobersided newsgatherers in the annals of journalism. It is with this background and this bent that Warren Moscow, head of the *New York Times* Albany bureau, has written "Politics in the Empire State." This may sound like praising with faint damns, but it is meant as a sincere compliment. If the reader is seeking a sensational exposé of the O'Connell machine which has had the New York State capital in its thrall these many years, let him go elsewhere. If he is interested in the gossip which passes for "beats" among syndicated columnists, this is not his book. If he wants a calm, clear, and highly revealing picture of what makes the most complicated state in the 48 tick, let him plunk three dollars in coin of the realm on the counter. He has found his book.

New York, from the St. Lawrence to the Sound, has been Mr. Moscow's beat for a good many years, and by now I should imagine that politically he knows it as well as the palm of his hand. That he can dissect the involved constitutional set-up whereby the outnumbered upstate can wedge in that monster among cities, New York; that he can lay bare the monkey business which passes for a transaction of legislation in Albany and still show that by and large the system works out for the common good; that he can analyze the jockeying of the splinter parties without getting involved in their squabbles; that he can describe the frigid Dewey administration and Mr. Thomas E. Dewey himself (in the context of Al Smith, FDR, and Herbert Lehman) without succombing to his all-out dislike of the Republican presidential nominee; and that he can salt the 238 pp. of his book with a liberal helping of anecdote drawn from his personal experience as a reporter and observer, is a feat of considerable consequence.

Mr. Moscow has done all this, thrown in some helpful statistics on past elections, underlined the importance of New York state as a breeding place for presidents, and almost inobtrusively anatomized the state's political structure with the same ease that he would write a one-column story for the *Times*. He has given the facts and the color without mounting a white horse or going lickety-split for a handy windmill. The result has been highly readable, exceptionally interesting, and more than a little valuable in an election year.

RALPH DE TOLEDANO

Young Mr. Newman. Maisie Ward. Sheed. $4.50.

HERE is a book to linger over, to keep beside you, to treasure with affection. At a time when the Assembly of the World Council of Churches has been considering many of the delicate problems of union and reunion, Maisie Ward goes directly to the heart of the matter. In a magnificent blueprint of the early years of Cardinal Newman, she retraces the quest for certitude and charts the inevitable path for those who would serve one God and one Church. It is a compass for the times in which we live.

Although there is a great timeliness about it, this book is in no sense what the lawyers would call a special pleading. It is simply a superb piece of objective biography, a worthy companion piece to her father's definitive work on the same subject. But where the earlier book could deal only briefly with the formative years of Newman, this book is devoted exclusively to those years. We come to know Newman's family as well as we know the Oxford Movement itself. We meet the boy as well as the man, and we begin to understand, as few Catholics of his time could understand, the power and the drive which lay behind the genius who was so many things to so many people. We come to know the warm-hearted human being whose thinking still shapes the better patterns of our time.

It is this quality of "knowing" which distinguishes the whole book. We feel that we really know Mrs. Newman, Jemima, Harriet, Frank and Charles. We are at home with Keble, Pusey, Church and the Wilberforces. We even get inside that curious gadfly of the Oxford Movement, the ebullient Mr. Golightly. And there are some gorgeous portraits of W. G. Ward, the author's grandfather, wonderfully candid and quite indispensable to a good understanding of the period.

Yet there is one full-length portrait missing in this gallery of giants. One sees, it is true, the figure of Henry Edward Manning moving in the shadows, but these are fleeting half-tones and they are brushed over lightly. The result is a rather oversimplified impression of Manning the Victorian: the eager, friendly, active Archdeacon who hovered anxiously on the outskirts of the Oxford Movement and who in due time followed the leader of that Movement into the Roman Catholic Church. There is no word here of those other events which seem to foreshadow the relations of these two converts in later years. Nothing is said of the famous sermon by Manning, when he went down to St. Mary's on Guy Fawkes Day in the year 1843, and repudiated the Oxford Movement in the very pulpit where his old friend

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first gave voice to the *via media*. Nor is any mention made of the rapidity with which, on the same day, Manning went out to Littlemore in a vain attempt to see Newman and to assure him that he still held him in high regard. Yet it would seem, to this reviewer at least, that it is impossible to understand the Newman and the Manning of later years without a full and frank consideration of the difficulties which they encountered in their Oxford years. Manning of the later years, with his inevitable distrust of everything identified with Oxford, is the same Manning who was never too happy in the Oxford Movement long years before. And at this date surely there is no reason to be reticent about the matter. If these two great men could not always see the same things in each other, it is exciting to remember that they could see many of the same virtues in the same Church. In fact, the evidence for the unity and the sanctity of that Church is all the more impressive because of the occasional diversity of these two witnesses for the Faith.

Of course, to be completely realistic, it would require a whole volume to do justice to the relations of Newman and Manning. So we should be grateful to Maisie Ward for carrying out with extraordinary grace the specific assignment which she set herself here. We have now the complete Newman up to the year 1845, and students of Newman the world over will rejoice to discover that it is dedicated to the scholar to whom they all owe so much, Father Henry Tristram. This is a work of loving care and there is a mellow feeling about all of it. To read it is to warm one's heart again at a great fire.

EMMET LAVERY

Prize Stories of 1948: *The O. Henry Awards. Selected and edited by Herschel Brickell. Doubleday.* $3.00.

"THE most notable feature of the short-story situation today is the absence of any large number of steady producers of tales of quality and originality. New writers keep coming up to save the day, and this year, as in several previous years, first stories make up a considerable part of the collection, but few of their authors seem to develop sufficiently to warrant a second appearance."

These two sentences from Editor Brickell's introduction explain in some measure the air of inadequacy which hangs over a good many of the 23 stories in this volume. To apply in reverese a criticism made by Walter Havighurst, who with John Cournos and Helen Everitt aided the editor in selecting the four prize winners, they seem to contain *less* experience than they relate.

Despite the pleasing variety of subjects and writing displayed in the stories, the editor and judges had to confront an astonishingly uniform lack of success which undoubtedly rendered difficult their selection of the O. Henry Award winners. First prize was given to Truman Capote for "Shut a Final Door," which is well executed but seems rather juvenile in its purely clinical insight into character. Wallace Stegner's "Beyond the Glass Mountain," which won second prize, is, on the other hand, solid, deep and mature, offering the reader matter for long reflection. It is not, as the judges remark, one of his best stories, but many readers are likely to think it the best in this volume. Ray Bradbury, who received the third prize for "Powerhouse," displays a superior talent as a writer, but the mystical experience

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upon which he has founded this story is facile and impermanent despite its originality. The prize for the best first story was awarded to Elliott Grennard for "Sparrow's Last Jump," a skilfully handled account of the disintegration of a jazz musician's mind.

One story, which received no special comment from the judges, rises well above mediocrity and, by contrast, illustrates technical weakness common to many of the other stories in the collection. In "The Ascent," Ray B. West, Jr., employs an action rather than a character as his prime mover, allowing his personages to emerge slowly and with an intriguing lack of clarity from a bold and uncommon incident. The result is a story clean-cut in its form and subtly provocative in its psychological implications. As a technical achievement alone, it has real value. THOMAS H. CORDLE

The New Testament in the Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures from the original Greek. Cuthbert S. Lattey. Longmans. $4.00.

THIS IS THE new "small edition" of the famous scholarly work by the English Jesuits, revised and brought up to date. The cumbersome four volumes have been reduced to one by using thinner paper and smaller print and by a radical reduction of the fine introductions to their bare skeleton. However, this is no loss, as this handy and elegant edition is not meant for scholars, but for those faithful who want to read a version not made from the vulgate but the original texts. Educated laymen will profit by going back to this text which is much closer in vocabulary and style to the old Douay version than both the so-called confraternity edition or Ronald Knox. Yet the very words of the "Our Father" show that the translators give the original faithfully even when they have to sacrifice the traditional words, e.g.: "Our Father in the heavens . . . forgive us our debts as ourselves *have* forgiven our debtors." While the language has not the plasticity of Knox, its fidelity to the original is something very reassuring and this reassurance is a great compensation. I sincerely hope that its sale will prove the growing awareness of Catholics of the Word of God in Whom was life. H. A. REINHOLD.

Into the Labyrinth. Bentz Plagemann. Farrar. $2.75.

THE clash between the Catholic heritage and that of "older Americans" is one which promises much to the novelist; it has been variously exploited in the past few years, most notably in Edward McSorley's "Our Own Kind." Although Mr. Plagemann's novel depends for setting on this kind of religious regionalism, he has a purpose beyond it. He intends a formal allegory which will oppose ritualistic pattern and experience, this through demonstration of "the difference between symbol and fact, between ceremony and action, between prayer and a way of life."

Because of this purpose the "labyrinth" into which the protagonist of this novel falls bears a contrived and not at all inevitable air. Just as the season of Lent is arbitrarily used to set the temporal boundary and climate of young Robert Vandermeer's "ritualistic" Catholicism, so does the temptation set for him seem (as it often is in Graham Greene) both capricious and malignly fated. This young boy's meeting with Mrs. Browning—"a beautiful, rich, and incontinent woman," to borrow the prose of the dust jacket—smacks of all the coachman and great lady situations known to literature. Surely it is the folklore of fiction rather than that of life which requires that after Robert's sin retribution must touch the romantic hero from outside. Two people perforce commit suicide, and an innocent young girl will have to "wait." When the novel loses all sense of the nature of penitence, "payment" must always come through violence and melodrama.

Mr. Plagemann had a glimpse of something valid and searching when he started. He had caught hold of the conflict between the interior and exterior arcs of experience, that contest which C. S. Lewis sees as the subtlest of modern temptations for the Christian. Yet though his Catholic tangibilities ring true enough, his angle of vision does not. The *meum* of the novelist and the *tuum* of his protagonist are not clearly distinguished. The author realizes this, for he lamely admits: "If Robert did not see it in these terms, if he could not state it so clearly to himself . . . at least the thoughts were there." The failure in sensibility results in a failure of technique. For young Robert is not "seen"; he appears in his actions as marginal comment to Mr. Plagemann's rhapsody and editorial. RILEY HUGHES

Seeing More Things. John Mason Brown. Whittlesey. $3.50.

ONE comes to expect the finest in critical thought and perfection of style from John Mason Brown, and yet one is fearful that his second book *perhaps* may not be quite up to his first, his third to his second, and so on up the line. That anyone of his distinction in both the fields of dramatic criticism and reportage in general can sustain such a peak of integrity and sensitivity without pedantry or trickery is wellnigh incredible.

This volume, "Seeing More Things," new essays on the theatre and films and ordinary incidents, capped by an unerring and challenging commencement address, is of the same high calibre as Mr. Brown's earlier writing.

Few drama critics of repute have been the witty and wise writer that John Mason Brown is. His critical essays lack the easy, loud savagery and fretful vaporings of many of the Broadway Solomons. Mr. Brown is nonetheless devastating with his particular havoc when there is *just* cause. His mind, detesting the mediocrity which pleases the multitude, does not, as so many reforming dragons do, scorn the multitude, but scorns only the mediocrity. I think the clue to his special accomplishment is that he sees *through* and *around* the motivation of the idea being presented, whatever its form. He flies directly to the core and leaves the more pretentious *pas de deux* to the unwinged. To Mr. Brown, criticism is not necessarily destruction; it is very often construction. Because of this broad avenue, he remains honest and sturdily realistic; that is to say, not perpetually outward bound.

"Seeing More Things" is a collection of pieces which would not be a roaring success in a daily paper. They are too leisurely for a rapid intake, too meaty to be bolted. They should be savored, not swallowed whole. Take, for example, the fanfare for Ethel Merman, where the author cracks his wit with a delightfully telling effect: "Even before the atomic bomb there was Ethel Merman. . . . Her energy is something that the United Nations might well look into, even if they could never hope to control it. . . . Miss Merman could serve the

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scientists as a model. From her they might learn that it is possible to devastate without destroying, and only by delighting."

Then there is Mr. Brown's tidy disposal of "Allegro," but even his obvious discomfort over that musical is tempered by his acceptance of its "sheer craftsmanship," and that it was "at least original in the intention of its writing."

"The Fruit of Enlightenment" is a warmly devoted tribute to Edith Hamilton and her latest book, "Witness to the Truth—Christ and His Interpreters." This essay is one of the most civilized and human critiques I have read.

John Mason Brown has, in addition to his discerning eye and equitable wit, a large sense of humanity himself. This is clearly shown in the final essay, "Under the Aspect of Eternity," an address delivered at Clark University:

> "We once fought a war supposed to end war. We now know that war is not a means of achieving that end. Peace is the only time in which to make war on war. That is why . . . you will look upon this strange, unhappy peace as an emergency. You will turn to God as unashamedly as men did before battle. You will be unembarrassed by the phrases and emotions which came naturally to you in the presence of that other threat of death.
>
> "Do not delude yourselves. This emergency will grant you no leaves. It knows no separation centers. Upon its duration, not only all of our living but civilization itself depends. . . .
>
> "'The time for greatness.' Was this phrase used to describe the war years? The time for greatness is now. It has always been. It will always be. Man's refusal to admit this is one of the reasons why so many of history's pages, which could have been brightened with hopes realized, have been blackened with avoidable miseries."

ELIZABETH JOHNSON

No Highway. Nevil Shute. Morrow. $3.00.

FATIGUE in the light alloys in airplane structure does not seem a breathless theme for a story yet Mr. Shute has managed to make it the pivot of an absorbing and dramtic plot with a unique hero in Mr. Honey, the little scientist who looked like a bespectacled frog but whose simple-hearted genius won him the love of three bautiful women.

The "fatigue" which interested Mr. Honey is "a disease of metals subjected to alternating loads." Mr. Honey had built up a theory about it on a nuclear fission basis and was busy vibrating the tailplane of a Reindeer to prove that, if the energy it absorbed in a given number of hours would set up a tension in the aluminum in its alloy and release some neutrons which might suddenly turn the aluminum into a crystalline substance, the tailplane would snap. Mr. Honey had been quietly vibrating his Reindeer tailplane for two months when Dr. Scott, who tells the story, was put in charge of the Structural Department of the Royal Aircraft Establishment and was confronted by two rather startling facts: that Mr. Honey's atomic calculations gave the tailplane 1440 hours before it would break and that BOAC's new transatlantic airliners were Reindeers! Of course there was always the possibility that Mr. Honey's calculations might be wrong: also up to date no Reindeer had flown

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more than 305 hours. But a disagreeable angle to the situation appeared when Scott learned that the prototype Reindeer had had exactly 1393 flying hours when it crashed into a mountain near Gander.

From that point on the story races along with Mr. Honey's adventures—how he meets the most beautiful screen star and saves an airliner's passengers. "No Highway" seems the season's best gift to the pictures but it will take an actor like Leo G. Carroll to do full justice to Mr. Honey, who educates his motherless little daughter in higher mathematics about the Pyramids; in automatic writing; in his theory of the Lost Tribes, and the second coming of Christ to Glastonbury. Dr. Scott and his wife are good friends to Elspeth Honey and her father, whose acquaintance I recommend to all readers.

E. V. R. WYATT.

The Portable Greek Reader. Edited by W. H. Auden. Viking. $2.00.

THE LATE William Lyon Phelps said that he never reviewed a book unless he could praise it. Why publicize something of which one disapproves?

An exception to this doctrine seems to be justified in the case of the "Greek Reader." The attractive format, the large number of pages, the low price, and the title combine to make a tempting bait. And Americans are likely to be suckers for culture on a barbed hook. How many sets of Eliot's "Five Foot Book Shelf" are gathering dust?

Mr. Auden says that this anthology is planned as "an introduction to Greek culture rather than Greek literature." This implies selections chosen with a view to the needs of readers who have no classical training. For such readers many of the passages in this volume are almost impossibly difficult. Though the translations are excellent, they might as well, so far as a reader to whom Greek culture is virgin territory is concerned, be written in Greek. Yet old lovers of the classics will find little to reward them.

NICHOLAS MOSELEY.

CORRECTION: *Rev. Daniel M. Cantwell, author of "Secularism in Church" (October 1 issue) is not now at Mundelein Seminary but is with the Catholic Labor Alliance in Chicago.*

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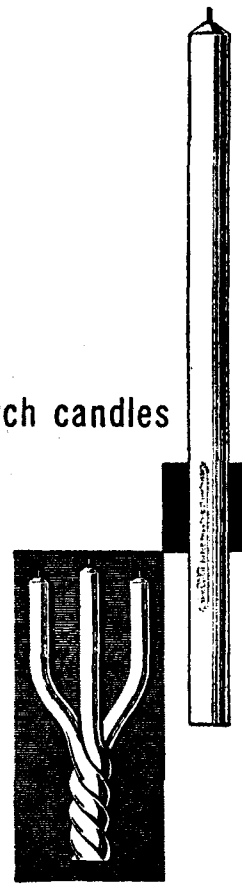

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